[Translation]

Telecom facilities in Gujarat

2574. DR. A.K. PATEL : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government of Gujarat has sent any scheme to the Union Government for providing telecommunications facilities in the backward and tribal areas of the State;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action being taken by the Union Government thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) to (c) No, Sir. However, the Deptt. of Telecommunications has formulated tribal Sub Plan for providing Telecom. facilities in Tribal areas of the country including those of Gujarat. During the year 1997-98, addition of about 8000 lines of net switching capacity and 5000 new telephone connections have been planned for Tribal areas of Gujarat. No separate plans are formulated for the backward areas which form part of the overall plan of the State.

[English]

Profit of MTNL

2575. SHRI I.D. SWAMI : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether MTNL has understated its profit by Rs. 109 crores;

(b) if so, the facts thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) and (b) No, Sir. In his coments on the accounts of MTNL for the year 1995-96, Audit wing of the CAG opined that the profit figure was understated to the extent of Rs. 109 crores due to higher rates of depreciation applied by the Company on various assets. However, MTNL's view was that it was quite in order for the company to apply a higher rate of depreciation based in technical evaluation in accordance with the Company Law and that these rates had been adopted since 1993-94.

(c) Does not arise in view of (a) and (b) above.

[Translation]

Drinking Water to Drought Affected Areas of UP

2576. SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN : Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken or proposed to be taken for providing drinking water in drought affected areas of Uttar Pradesh;

(b) the amount sanctioned by the Union Government for this purpose during the current financial year;

(c) whether the Government have any action plan for permanent solution of water scarcity in these areas; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT SHRI KINJARAPPU YERRANNAIDU : (a) Schemes for drinking water in drought affected and other rural areas of Uttar Pradesh are implemented under the State Sector Minimum needs Programme, the Centrally Sponsored Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme and under the Basic Minimum Services.

(b) The amount allocated so far by the Union Government under the ARWSP for 1997-98 is Rs. 122.78 crore. The Scheme-wise/district/area-wise allocation is made by the State Government.

(c) and (d) All the not covered habitations are expected to be provide with safe drinking water facilities by 1998-99 and the partially covered habitations by the year 2000.

[English]

Suspension of Trains

2577. SHRI G.A. CHARAN REDDY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a number of trains between Nizamabad and Medchal route have been suspended from 1st July, 1997;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the total number of trains suspended;

(c) whether this suspension of trains has created problems in the district of Nizamabad; and

(d) if so, the steps being taken by the Government to restore these trains immediately?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) and (b) 3 (three) pairs of Express, 3 (three) pairs of passengers fully and 4 (four) pairs of passenger trains partially were cancelled on account of law and order problems due to naxalite activities.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Constant liaison is maintained with the State Government authorities for providing security to passengers

staff and Railway installations against attach by extremists so that the services can be restored.

National Centre of Films

2578. SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether National Centre of Films for Children and Young People in various cities are being set up in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof, Statewise;

(c) whether the Government propose to extend such facilites for the rural children also; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINSTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) No, Sir. At present, there is no proposal to set up offices of National Centre of Films for Children and Young People (N'CYP) in various cities of different State.

(c) and (d) N'CYP exhibits its films and serials through Doordarshan Network and theatres. Since Doordarshan transmission covers both urban and rural areas, the programmes of N'CYP are already available to rural children also.

[Translation]

Introduction of Dikshant Bhoomi Express

2579. SHRI SUSHIL CHANDRA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a weekly train Dikshant Bhoomi Express (1451) Nagpur-Gaya-Nagpur has been introduced;

(b) if so, whether the Government are considering any proposal to ensure that lakhs of citizens of Bhopal are benefited by this train;

(c) whether any train has been introduced between Bhopal and Patna;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether the Government are considering to start Cochin-Barauni-Cochin weekly train on daily basis; and

(f) if so, the time by which this proposal is likely to be materialised?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) 1451/1452 Nagpur-Gaya Diksha Bhoomi Express (weekly) is not running *via* Bhopal.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Operational and resource constraints.

(e) No, Sir.

(f) Does not arise.

[English]

National Film Festival at Cannes

2580. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether India participated in the National Film Festival at Cannes during the last month;

(b) if so, the film displayed thereat;

(c) whether any Bengali film was also screened;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) India's achievements at the Cannes Festival?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAISPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Out of the entries sent by India, only one film titled "Gudia" (Hindi) was selected by the Cannes Film Festival Authorities in `Uncertain Regard' section of the Festival.

(c) and (d) No, Sir, The film 'Lal Darja' (Bengali) which was one of the entries sent by India was not selected for screening by the Festival Authorities.

(e) Cannes is a very prestigious International Film Festival. The Festival receives entries of films from the world over. Although the selection process of this Festival is very strict, films from India have been selected, almost every year, for screening in one or the other section of the Festival. A number of our eminent film-makers have got international recognition through screening of their films at the Cannes International Film Festival.

[Translation]

Modernisation of Railway Stations in Delhi

2581. SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the funds allocated for the modernisation of railway stations in Delhi during the current financial year;